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people calling themselves Christians try to think that they ought to teach it to infants as the doctrine of the Christ, who shamed the religionists of his day by bidding them become like the children, in whom he delighted.

With these and similarly one-sided and half-baked criticisms of Christianity in the negative part of his book, and some strange flights of fancy treated as certain truths guaranteed by that new pope "the modern mind" in its positive

and affirmative statements, Mr. Wells is provocative of controversy. Nevertheless, there is a vital idea in it that outweighs all its dubious notions and may be welcomed as one of the signs of the times full of hope and cheer. Here is an earnest attempt to break up the crust of convention, to turn from the dust and ashes of secularism and weary worldliness, to open up the living wells of the spiritual life, and once again to find the soul's only satisfaction in God.

LUTHER AND PAUL: THEIR EXPERIENCES AND DOCTRINES OF SALVATION

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The course of history is punctuated here and there by the extraordinary achievements of isolated individuals who seem, at first glance, to have been detached from their groups by the radical character of their contributions to progress. On the other hand, they seem to be dependent upon each other because of the similarity of their expressed thought. An excellent illustration of this is seen in the case of the apostle Paul when he broke with Judaism and began to shape Christian thought; or in the case of Luther, who opposed the established churchly order and inaugurated the momentous Reformation movement. Each of these leaders appears unrelated to his past when once he is well started on his great work, and the one seems to

have been guided in his course by the recorded thought of his predecessor.

Both Paul and Luther have much in common through their mutual insistence upon justification by faith and by faith alone. The similarity of belief should really be extended to a similarity of experience within certain limits. As far as all outward evidence is concerned, Luther depended upon Paul for his conception of salvation, but the appropriate question to ask at this point is whether or not he *learned* his doctrine of justification from Paul's letters. In the same way we may ask whether or not Paul learned his doctrine from Abraham's experience.

It has been customary to point out the likenesses in belief which are pre-

served in literary documents and to come to the conclusion that literary dependence accounts for the fact. There is a limited field within which this may be done, but the study of the psychology of leadership opens up many possibilities among which an explanation may be more readily secured. There is a closer connection between the thought and the experience of men than is apparent at first glance. And, furthermore, there is a greater degree of likeness between the experiences of such outstanding men as Paul and Luther than between their formal thought. Nothing will illustrate this more adequately than a brief review of their chief teaching, particularly with regard to salvation.

In a word, Paul may be said to have believed in salvation by faith because he was saved by faith. His position as a Pharisee of the ethical type placed him under great stress of inner life. Had he been more legalistic in his Pharisaism, conversion would have been thwarted by callousness and indifference to the mollifying effects of moral tendencies. He was, however, in close touch with the traditional teaching of Judaism, and even carried over into Christianity most of the beliefs which the Jewish fathers had long been teaching.

Salvation was the chief concern of Paul, as it has been with all truly great religious leaders. He was anxious for the betterment of himself and his people in the presence of his God. He had inherited a scheme by which salvation was thought to be made possible—a scheme partly moral, partly forensic and legal, sometimes wholly forensic and legal, but never since the days of the great prophets predominantly moral.

The teaching about salvation current in Paul's day, may be summarized as follows: God gave a law, the requirements of which man must keep, if he expected to be accounted righteous or justified by God's forensic decree. The law was glorified and made the channel through which divine benefits could flow; and the works of the law, in whatever way they were interpreted, were the full measure of man's part in the attainment of salvation. But, as the ultimate goal of his hope was not an inward peace and satisfaction in the midst of his moral struggle, it was necessary that the future hold the guaranty of his redemption. Hence the introduction of the apocalyptic Messiah who should usher in the heaven-sent régime and prepare the way for the final verdict of God in the day of the Great Assize. The program, then, is as follows: Man was in a condition of sin and subject to the wrath of God, which meant death. His goal was a righteous or pure life and the final approval of God, which meant eternal life. To reach it, he must keep the law, with which he had been provided by divine kindness. The meeting of this requirement was in itself a guaranty, a token of final salvation. The purpose of the scribes was to define the law so that error would be inexcusable. The next step, while not dependent upon man's action, was necessarily a part of the process of salvation, a part of God's way of accepting man, since man himself thought of his final salvation in the future world. Hence the coming of the Messiah and the judgment, followed by the bliss promised at the outset.

In studying Paul's later thought we see few changes, but a plan much

different in operation from that of his Pharisaism. The only radical change was the substitution of *faith* for *works*, which meant the dropping of the law and the introduction of the Messiah as the object of faith, now identified with the risen Jesus. (It may be more psychological to say that the risen Jesus was identified with the Messiah.) Other changes are the "spiritualization" of the resurrection life, making it less material, and the increased emphasis on the moral earthly life, as an expression of the possession of the Spirit, an earnest of the life to come.

What wrought this change? As indicated above, it was Paul's experience, the expression of his own genius in the midst of his environment. The crucial test of his life came at his conversion. While we shall never know all the data of that transformation, we see in that experience the realization of salvation by faith in action before we see it in words. Paul later believed in salvation by faith, because he was now saved by faith. He experienced a new and satisfying relief which the law had not been able to give him. How soon Paul realized the importance of this radical change we have no means of determining; but we know that when he was in the midst of his preaching for the gentiles and against the Judaizers he was confident upon every point involved.

Many of the experiences through which Paul passed are similar, in spite of the change of the centuries, to those of Luther, that other great preacher of faith. The Law was the glory of Jewish history and was the medium through

which man could be saved. Just so was the church the glory of the ecclesiastical Roman Empire, and through it, literally, was man to be saved. The Law prescribed works, and the church set up certain observances as necessary. Paul zealously kept the Law, but found no satisfaction. Luther earnestly sought to live within the church, but could not. At these points the situations of Luther and of Paul are not greatly to be differentiated.

The motive which impelled Paul to search out a new way was a desire (1) to escape from sin and (2) to escape from the wrath of God. The corollaries are at once evident: (1) to be pure in life and (2) to be declared righteous. With Luther there appears to have been a reversal of these two points. He seemed to fear above all things the wrath of God, though it is not at all to be supposed that he would condone a sinful life, however strong might be one's profession of faith. "As wrath is a greater evil than the corruption of sin, so race is a greater good than the perfect righteousness which we have said comes from faith. For there is no one who would not prefer (if this could be) to be without perfect righteousness than without the grace of God."¹ Driven by the desire to be assured of salvation, he sought here and there for an answer. Church and monastery alike failed him, though he did not at once repudiate them. The controversy over indulgences was not the real bone of contention, but it was the reagent which clarified the issues. It thus came to hold relatively the same functional value for

¹ *Against Latomus*; Erlangen edition of the *Opera Latina Varii Argumenti*, V, 489; cited in McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 24.

him that the persecution of the Way, and the trip from Jerusalem to Damascus, had for Paul. Luther, under the stress of controversy, attacked the church in its worst form, as Paul had attacked the Law in its worst form, and came to a similar conclusion. He grasped the words of Paul as offering a solution, or, rather, as actually validating the conclusions toward which his own religious convictions were driving him—"saved by faith."

Whatever may be the significance of eschatology in Paul's thinking, it is clear that he thought of salvation being achieved fully only in the future life, though forensically guaranteed by justification through faith. Luther, however, because of the fact that eschatology was less immediate and vital, but particularly because he thought of salvation primarily as release from God's wrath, believed himself saved now even though he was yet sinful. His phraseology does not even allow itself to be stretched until it appears to imply progress, which is true of Paul's; but man is saved now, and good deeds flow from him without effort or purpose, if they flow at all. His belief was in a God who was a judge and whose decree freed one from punishment. But beyond this there was a conception of a loving God with whom a mystical relationship was established. The union thus affected was the source of the good deeds of man. They were not possible apart from union with God, not possible until after salvation. A position such as this cut the ground from beneath any claim that good deeds could avail anything for man, and apparently this was

Luther's intention. The premise being granted, his argument was logically more tenable than Paul's; however, the premise itself is not tenable. Paul saw this and reasoned that good works were always good works in the eyes of the Lord.¹ This concession weakened his position of faith versus works, but only from the standpoint of pure logic.

Another point is to be examined, dealing with the vital part of Luther's conception of salvation. Just as Paul shifted from the Law to Jesus the Messiah, so Luther shifted from the church as the extra-human agent of salvation to a force that was really quickening. He found the gospel the Word of God. It was to him the true message of God. It was only after he was pressed for external authority that he permitted himself to identify in any way the Bible and the Word of God. His earlier conception was capable of giving great freedom and expansiveness to his movement, though at the same time it was both weak and subjective. The Word was in the Bible; it was also in the sacraments. But it was not the Bible; nor was it the church and its sacraments. The scholasticism, however, which followed his first great attacks on the Roman church gave great prominence to the identity of Word and Bible. Luther himself yielded in part to this tendency.

McGiffert² says that Luther made the church a primary means of salvation; but, if the Word is a means of salvation, the church is at least secondary to it, for it (the church) only dispenses the Word. The point is well taken, however, that the church is an important means of

¹ Rom. 2:6-11.

² *Protestant Thought before Kant*, pp. 41-45.

salvation in the Lutheran scheme, though it no longer conveys grace as in Catholic thought.

The elements in Luther's idea of salvation which have been discussed here are those which his own peculiar genius evolved. They are his own because they were consecrated by his deepest religious struggles as he sought assurance of pardon and freedom from God's wrath. His experience was similar to that of Paul, though he was far less dependent upon the hero of the gentile mission than has generally been thought. He seized upon the words "saved by faith" as Paul had used the faith of Abraham to give weight to his argument.¹ If Luther had not had the experience which he did, a thousand Pauls might have lived before him and there would have been no Protestant Reformation.

Attention has been called to the fact that Paul passed into his Christian faith by altering his earlier belief at a few places only. The same phenomenon may be shown in the case of Luther by examining the doctrinal part of the Augsburg Confession. Though it was actually written by a man much milder than Luther, this symbol nevertheless bears the stamp of the master-Protestant rather than that of Melancthon.

The first article ("De Deo") of Part First ("Chief Articles of Faith") is clearly in agreement with the Nicene formula, a recognized Catholic document. Throughout the Confession other similarities may be noted: e.g., in the treatment of sin, Christ's return, and free will.

Article IV ("De justificatione") might be expected to elaborate the

crucial point over which Luther wrestled, but it does not go beyond a short positive statement "that men cannot be justified before God by their own powers, merits, or works; but are justified freely for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and their sins forgiven for Christ's sake, who by his death hath satisfied for our sins. This faith doth God impute for righteousness before him. Romans 3 and 4." Later, in Article XX, on "Good Works," and in Part II ("Abuses"), Article V ("De discrimine ciborum") greater opposition to the current Catholic belief is shown in positive statements that "works cannot reconcile God, or deserve remission of sins, grace, justification at his hands. These are obtained by faith only; when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake." "It is necessary to do good works; not that we may trust that we deserve grace by them, but because it is the will of God that we do them" (Part I, Art. XX; cf. Part I, Arts. V, VI; Part II, Art. V).

The point of departure for Luther is in his position on faith versus works. Starting from that, he attacks the hierarchy of the Roman church which directed and assigned the "works." Just as Paul had passed from particularism to universalism through the adoption of "faith," so Luther passed from the priestly hierarchy to his doctrine of "the universal priesthood of believers." This step being taken, he modified the traditional teaching so as to admit the Lord's Supper in "two kinds." Similarly "baptism is necessary to salvation, and by baptism the grace of God is

¹ Rom. chap. 4.

offered (and children are to be baptized, who by baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favor)" (Part I, Art. IX).

The Lord's Supper, no longer in the hands of a priesthood set apart by the church and empowered with special miraculous ability in order to give to the emblems of the Eucharist a sacred and divine substance, is, however, still filled with divinity in a most literal sense. This is effected, not by the miraculous power of the priest, but by virtue of the quality of the Lord's body itself. Thus with difficulty the Catholic doctrine of the actual presence is accommodated to the new idea of a universal priesthood of believers not possessed of special miraculous powers.

The only significant point of difference between these two preachers of faith (Paul and Luther) is in the quality attributed to faith itself. To Paul it was mystical, but ethical, probably because escape from sin was most prominent in his mind. But Luther, seeking a forensic decree from God, was more inclined to insist on conformity to accepted belief, as the Catholic church had done for centuries.

The similarity of the teaching of Paul and Luther regarding salvation, particularly as touching *faith*, the keynote for both, is not to be attributed to depend-

ence of one upon the other through literary media. The cause of the likeness is to be found in the experience of each which tested them at the same point. First, they both had emotional and deeply religious natures. Their inherited systems of thought and government were full of abuses. At a critical moment each rebelled against the established order. The outcome was that certain substitutions were made in the traditional schemes, but comparatively few things were given up. Those things that were retained were not antagonistic to the new experience. The feature that made their "reformations" forceful was the fact that they changed the old-time bases from which man started to faith. It was this fact that made their work more effective than the discussions about what God did and could have done before the creation of the world. The doctrine of faith, being rooted in the experience of Paul and Luther, and being directed at every man's experience, was thus pushed out into a field of great usefulness. There was something in the experience of each man which gave vitality to the plea of faith versus works. And, in so far as that plea has won adherents to its side, it is because the stress of circumstances has discovered or created a community of interests.